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Calendar No. 589

99TH CONGRESS 2d Session | SENATE | REPORT 99-270

H139 ORIGINAL

DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN FEATURES AT THE PLANET URANUS IN HONOR OF THE CHALLENGER SPACE SHUTTLE ASTRONAUTS

MARCH 26 (legislative day, MARCH 18), 1986.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. DANFORTH, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. Res. 332]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the resolution (S. Res. 332) to honor the Challenger space shuttle astronauts, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the resolution be agreed to.

PURPOSE OF RESOLUTION

The purpose of this resolution is to honor the seven Challenger astronauts by recommending to the International Astronomical Union (IAU) that it name seven of the newly-discovered moons of Uranus or other suitable features of Uranus after the seven Challenger astronauts.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

During the month of January 1986, the U.S. spacecraft Voyager encountered the planet Uranus. In the course of this encounter, the Voyager discovered 10 new moons of Uranus.

On January 28, 1986, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded upon liftoff, killing Francis Scobee, Michael Smith, Judith Resnik, Gregory Jarvis, Ronald McNair, Ellison Onizuka, and Christa McAuliffe.

In an effort to memorialize the shuttle crew, two Senate resolutions—S. Res. 318 and S. Res. 332—were introduced. Both of these resolutions recommended that the Congress recommend that the

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IAU name the recently-discovered moons of Uranus after these seven crew members of Mission 51-L.

The IAU, a body of professional astronomers, has sole responsibility for naming celestial bodies. Most moons in the solar system are named for characters in Greek and Roman mythology. However, the five moons of Uranus that were known to exist before the Voyager encounter of January 1986 were named several years ago after characters in English literature.

The Voyager 2 spacecraft discovered 10 moons of the planet Uranus in January 1986, and S. Res. 332 would recommend to the IAU that 7 of these newly-discovered 10 moons be named after the 7 astronauts who lost their lives in the Challenger accident of January 28, 1986.

It should be noted that, even though images of these 10 moons were transmitted back to earth, it will take several months before the IAU can identify the orbits of these moons and thereby certify their existence. It could also take a considerable amount of time before the IAU were able to consider this congressional recommendation.

Therefore, S. Res. 332, as introduced, needed to be amended so that the recommendation to the IAU also include the option of assigning the names of the seven astronauts to "other suitable features discovered by Voyager at Uranus". This option would allow the IAU to assign the names of the astronauts to craters of previously-certified moons of Uranus or to other geographical features of Uranus. The IAU has similarly honored the three U.S. astronauts who were killed in the 1967 Apollo fire by naming three craters of the Moon after them. Furthermore, this amendment would allow the IAU some flexibility in its decision and would increase the chances that the astronauts will be memorialized in our solar system. It should also be noted that naming geographical features is a much less onerous process than naming moons, and the IAU normally defers to the wishes of the discovering nation, in this case, the United States.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On January 30, 1986, Senator Baucus introduced S. Res. 318, and on February 4, 1986, Senator Armstrong and 27 co-sponsors introduced S. Res. 332. Both resolutions were referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. On March 13, the Committee considered S. Res. 332. Senator Gorton offered to S. Res. 332 an amendment which would recommend that the IAU assign the names of the seven Challenger astronauts to "other suitable features discovered by Voyager at Uranus", as well as to the moons. The amendment passed without objection. The Committee then ordered S. Res. 332 to be reported favorably.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

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U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, March 21, 1986.

Hon. JOHN C. DANFORTH,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, U.S. Senate, 508 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed S. Res. 332, a resolution to honor the Challenger space shuttle astronauts, as amended and ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, March 13, 1986.

We estimate that enactment of this resolution would result in no additional cost to the federal government. The resolution states that it is the sense of the Senate that the newly discovered moons or other features of Uranus be named after the Challenger astronauts and recommends this action to the International Astronomical Union.

No costs would be incurred by state or local governments as a result of enactment of this resolution.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

RUDOLPH G. PENNER, *Director.*

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported.

This resolution recommends to the IAU that the names of the seven astronauts killed in the Space Shuttle Challenger accident of January 28, 1986, be assigned to seven of the newly-discovered moons of Uranus or to other suitable features discovered by the Voyager spacecraft at Uranus.

Any additional paperwork required by NASA or any other federal agency in carrying out this recommendation should not prove onerous.

Adoption of this resolution is not expected to result in any additional regulation or have any impact on the personal privacy of any individual.

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